

*Abstract of the Disclosure*

A system and method for improving the response time of text-to-speech synthesis utilizes “triphone contexts” (i.e., triplets comprising a central phoneme and its immediate  
5 context) as the basic unit, instead of performing phoneme-by-phoneme synthesis. The method comprises a method of generating a triphone preselection cost database for use in speech synthesis, the method comprising 1) selecting a triphone sequence  $u_1 - u_2 - u_3$ , 2) calculating a preselection cost for each 5-phoneme sequence  $u_a - u_1 - u_2 - u_3 - u_b$ , where  $u_2$  is allowed to match any identically labeled phoneme in a database and the units  $u_a$  and  
10  $u_b$  vary over the entire phoneme universe and 3) storing a group of the selected triphone sequences exhibiting the lowest costs in a triphone preselection cost database.